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ABSTRACT

This guide for community coalitions is designed to help them assist college and university officials address alcohol and drug problems on their campuses. The guide answers: (1) "How do college officials think about alcohol and other drug prevention?"; (2) "Why should community-based prevention coalitions include campus representatives?"; (3) "Who on campus should be approached?"; (4) "How can colleges and universities be persuaded to join a community-based coalition?"; (5) "How should the problem be framed?"; (6) "Do campus and community coalitions work?"; and (7) "What resources are available for help?" The guide also includes a list of policy objectives for campus and community coalitions and examples of relevant programs. (EV)

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A series of technical assistance manuals for community coalitions

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Working in Partnership with Local Colleges and Universities

Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America

HE033692

STRATEGIZER 34

Working in Partnership with Local Colleges and Universities

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S HIGHER EDUCATION CENTER
FOR ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG PREVENTION.

Developed by Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America
in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education

INTRODUCTION:

Now may be the best time to reach out to college and university officials about joining your community-based coalition for alcohol and other drug prevention.

While college presidents and other senior administrators have long said that problems related to student alcohol and other drug use are among the top issues they face, only recently do they seem ready to do something, especially about alcohol.

What changed? In 1997, the national press carried reports that campus police had found several students unconscious at a Louisiana State University (LSU) fraternity house. One student, Benjamin Wynne, died from alcohol poisoning.

Three weeks later, Scott Krueger, a student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), died from alcohol poisoning after a fraternity hazing incident. That such a senseless death could happen at MIT sent shock waves through higher education.

Every major news outlet in the United States covered these two events extensively. Since then reporters have paid a lot of attention to alcohol and other drug use problems on campus. In response, college and university administrators are feeling pressure to do something new to protect the health and safety of their students.

Your community coalition can play an important role in assisting college and university officials to address these problems. This *Strategizer* is designed to help you think about how best to do that.

KEY QUESTIONS:

- How Do College Officials Think About Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention?
- Why Should Community-Based Prevention Coalitions Include Campus Representatives?
- Who on Campus Should Be Approached?
- How Can Colleges and Universities Be Persuaded to Join a Community-Based Coalition?
- How Should the Problem Be Framed?
- Do Campus and Community Coalitions Work?
- What Resources Are Available for Help?

How Do College Officials Think About Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention?

Until recently, campus officials focused most of their prevention efforts on awareness education, including orientation for first-year students, alcohol awareness weeks and peer education. Education is necessary, of course, but research has shown that education has little effect on alcohol and other drug problems so long as the campus and community environment supports high-risk drinking and illicit drug use.

Acknowledging this emerging research, colleges and universities are now adopting a more comprehensive approach to prevention that highlights the importance of environmental change. The U.S. Department of Education's Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention promotes this approach to prevention under the rubric "environmental management."

The Higher Education Center urges college administrators to think about five types of environmental management strategies:

(1) Offer and promote social, recreational, extracurricular and public service options that do not include alcohol and other drugs;

(2) Create a social, academic and residential environment that supports health-promoting norms;

(3) Restrict marketing and promotion of alcoholic beverages both on and off campus;

(4) Limit alcohol availability both on and off campus; and

(5) Develop and enforce campus policies and local, state and federal laws.

Working in Partnership with Local Colleges and Universities

The Center promotes town-gown coalitions as a principal vehicle for achieving these types of environmental change. Clearly, high-risk drinking and other drug use are not just campus problems. They are community problems, and it will take the entire community to reduce them.

Two important objectives for a campus and community coalition are to curtail access to alcohol by underage youth and to eliminate irresponsible alcohol sales and marketing practices by local bars, restaurants and retail alcohol outlets. A coalition might achieve these objectives through the following:

(1) Changes in local zoning ordinances to reduce the density of alcohol sales outlets and to reform sales and marketing practices;

(2) A community-wide training and enforcement program for responsible beverage service;

(3) Stricter enforcement of the minimum drinking age; and

(4) New policies and stricter law enforcement to curtail impaired driving.

A longer list of environmentally focused policy objectives to deal with alcohol availability and alcohol sales and marketing practices appears on page 5.

For many years community-based prevention coalitions have made changes in state, local and institutional policy a priority. Many of these coalitions have enjoyed great success. As a result, you are now more likely to encounter college and university officials who not only understand but also support what community-based coalitions are trying to do.

Why Should Community-Based Prevention Coalitions Include Campus Representatives?

To be effective, a community-based coalition must have members who represent key constituencies and are highly motivated, politically well connected and articulate. In general, college and university presidents, vice presidents and deans, like other community leaders, can strengthen a coalition's visibility and vitality, while also contributing to its strategic vision.

Colleges and universities are also home to academic experts who can help with the coalition's work, including needs assessments, focus groups, research and evaluation, strategic planning and public education. Because they share their neighbors' concerns about quality of life in the community, many campus-based experts will be willing to donate their time.

Collaboration with a college or university can be a challenge. Their leaders have their own priorities and values, which may not always be consistent with those of the surrounding community. These institutions even operate on a different calendar, which is organized around the academic teaching schedule.

Despite these differences, most community-based prevention leaders recognize that participation of academic officials could greatly enhance the stature and power of their coalition. The question, then, is how you can best reach out to enlist their support.

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Policy Objectives for Campus and Community Coalitions

Alcohol Availability

- Prohibit alcohol use in public places.
- Prohibit delivery or use of kegs or other common containers on campus.
- Require use of registered and trained alcohol servers.
- Institute responsible server training programs.
- Disseminate guidelines for off-campus parties.
- Limit number and concentration of alcohol outlets near campus.
- Increase costs of alcohol sales licenses.
- Limit days or hours of alcohol sales.
- Limit container size for alcohol sales.
- Limit number of servings per alcohol sale.
- Require keg registration.
- Increase state alcohol taxes.

Policy Development and Enforcement

- Increase ID checks at on-campus functions.
- Use decoy operations at campus pubs and on-campus functions.
- Increase patrols near both on- and off-campus parties.
- Increase criminal prosecution of students for alcohol-related offenses.
- Change driver's licensing procedures and formats.
- Impose driver's license penalties for minors violating alcohol laws.
- Educate sellers/servers about potential legal liability.
- Increase ID checks at off-campus bars and liquor stores.
- Enforce seller penalties for sale of liquor to minors.
- Enforce laws against buying alcohol for minors.
- Enforce penalties for possessing fake ID.
- Use decoy operations at retail alcohol outlets.
- Increase enforcement of DUI laws.
- Pass ordinances to restrict open house assemblies and noise level.

Marketing and Promotion of Alcohol

- Ban or limit alcohol advertising in the vicinity of schools.
- Ban alcohol promotions with special appeal to underage drinkers.
- Ban alcohol promotions that show drinking in high-risk contexts.
- Require pro-health messages to counterbalance alcohol advertising.
- Institute cooperative agreement to institute minimum pricing.
- Institute cooperative agreement to limit special drink promotions.

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Who on Campus Should Be Approached?

Colleges and universities are complex organizations. Despite their hierarchical structure, these institutions usually operate on the basis of consensus and shared decision making. Moreover, it is often the case that no single office or department is responsible for the prevention of alcohol and other drug problems on campus. This complexity makes it hard to know where to begin in trying to bring a college or university into a community-based coalition.

Eventually you will want to meet with the college or university president. As the institution's chief executive officer, the president (or chancellor on some campuses) is responsible for maintaining the image and reputation of the school. Worried about alcohol and other drug problems on campus, and faced with increased media scrutiny, the vast majority of presidents will be wise enough to open their doors to representatives of a community-based prevention coalition.

Prior to contacting the president's office, however, you should learn more about the institution's current alcohol and other drug prevention program. Is there a campus task force in place? What new policies or programs have been implemented? Are efforts under way to work with the local business community, neighborhood associations or local police? A meeting with the president will be more successful when you are aware of what the school is already doing.

Who can best provide this background information? Many institutions belong to the Network of Colleges and Universities Committed to the Elimination of Drug and Alcohol Abuse. The principal contact for each member school can be found on the Network's Web site at www.edc.org/hec/network/. If the school is not a Network member, the vice president for student affairs or the dean of students will probably be your best source of information.

Depending on the institution, you might be able to contact the president's office directly for a meeting. In some cases, however, you may need the vice president for student affairs, the dean of students or some other campus official to approach the president on your coalition's behalf. Your key informant on campus can advise you.

Your goal should be to get the president to agree that the school will participate actively in your coalition. More often than not, the president will delegate this job to another administrator, such as the vice president for student affairs or dean of students. Ideally, this person will report directly to the president.

What do you do if a president is unwilling to meet with your coalition? In this case, you should still seek to identify and work with those administrators, faculty or other staff who place a high priority on reducing alcohol and other drug problems. Over time, they might be able to persuade the president to take a more active role. Meanwhile, their involvement with the coalition will make an important contribution.

How Can Colleges and Universities Be Persuaded to Join a Community-Based Coalition?

There are four lines of approach that can be used to persuade a president or other top academic leaders to join a community-based prevention coalition.

First, the Presidents Leadership Group (PLG), a group of college and university presidents convened by the Higher Education Center, strongly recommend that their colleagues join, and even form where necessary, a town-gown coalition that will work for institutional, community and public policy change to address alcohol-related problems.

A copy of the group's report, *Be Vocal, Be Visible, Be Visionary*, is available through the Center (see box at right). The thrust of the PLG's report is that presidents should take a leadership role in prevention, especially in areas not being addressed by other sectors of the community. Of the PLG's 13 recommendations, four are of particular relevance to community-based prevention activists:

(1) College presidents should appoint other senior administrators, faculty and students to participate in a campus-community coalition that is mandated to address alcohol and other drug issues in the community as a whole.

(2) College presidents should take the lead in identifying ways to effect alcohol and other drug prevention through economic development in the community.

(3) As private citizens, college presidents should be involved in policy change at the state and local level, working for new laws and regulations that will affect the community as a whole.

(4) Acknowledging that substance abuse is a problem that their schools have in common, college presidents should participate in state, regional and national associations to build support for appropriate changes in public policy.

PRESIDENTS LEADERSHIP GROUP HIGHER EDUCATION CENTER FOR ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG PREVENTION

– (November 1997)

Be Vocal

College presidents should openly and publicly acknowledge that alcohol and other drug abuse problems exist and then reach out to campus, community and state-level groups to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for prevention.

Be Visible

College presidents should take an active stand on alcohol and other drug issues, convey clear expectations and standards, and serve as a role model to other senior administrators, faculty, and students.

Be Visionary

College presidents should make alcohol and other drug abuse prevention a priority in their strategic plan for the school.

A copy of the Presidents Leadership Group's recommendations report, *Be Vocal, Be Visible, Be Visionary*, is available through the Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention. You may contact the Higher Education Center through its toll-free telephone number, (800) 676-1730, or via e-mail at HigherEdCtr@edc.org. The Center's Web site address is www.edc.org/hec/.

Second, parents of prospective college students have now discovered the high-risk drinking and safety issue. As a result, colleges and universities that refuse to acknowledge and take steps to deal with alcohol and other drug problems may suffer a competitive disadvantage in the academic marketplace. Involvement in a community-based coalition is a clear way for the president and other academic leaders to communicate an understanding of these problems and a strong desire to solve them.

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Third, on many campuses the president will have already formed a campus task force to study and develop strategies to combat alcohol and other drug problems. Typically, a task force includes representatives from an array of campus units, including the office of the dean of students, health services, athletics, fraternities and sororities, admissions, housing and campus security, as well as faculty and students. The Higher Education Center generally recommends that a task force also include at least one or two community representatives who can offer their perspective on campus policies and programs. Joining a large community-based coalition is a natural extension of having a campus task force.

Fourth, nearly half the states have organized regional or statewide programs as a way to involve a mix of higher education, community, business and government agencies in prevention. Key to these efforts is the formation of several campus and community coalitions at the local level. Leaders from these initiatives may be helpful in persuading a college president to join a local campus and community coalition.

The Higher Education Center can put you in contact with the leaders of a regional or statewide initiative in your state — or where such an initiative has not yet been launched, with those who might be able to help you start one. A description of how Pennsylvania's state initiative began appears in the box at right.

The Pennsylvania State Initiative

In July 1998, a crowd of 1,500 students and other young people at an off-campus art festival near Pennsylvania State University did more than $100,000 worth of damage to public facilities. It took a force of 150 police officers from six departments to break up the rioting.

In the aftermath of this disturbance, Penn State President Graham Spanier, who had gained distinction for confronting alcohol problems on his campus, sought out the assistance of the state's governor to broaden the prevention effort statewide.

In announcing the launching of a statewide prevention initiative, Pennsylvania's governor declared, "This isn't a Penn State problem. It's a cultural problem, a community problem, an American problem."

The focus of the Pennsylvania initiative is the formation of campus and community partnerships that will develop and implement environmental alcohol and other drug prevention strategies. With the governor's blessing, the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board (PLCB) has taken the lead in facilitating these partnerships, using $200,000 of its own funds for mini-grants to colleges and universities and a comprehensive training and technical assistance program.

How Should the Problem Be Framed?

Town/gown relations in some communities are strained. A frequent reason is the crime, disorder and other problems caused by college students who drink heavily or use other drugs, especially when there are large numbers of students living off campus. In frustration, community residents and local officials will sometimes blame college administrators for failing to "control" their students.

In most cases, campus officials are well aware of the scope of the problem. They also understand that environmental conditions in the broader community, not just on campus, have a tremendous influence on student behavior. Thus, when you approach campus officials, your focus should be on problems shared by the campus and community, not simply the problems "caused" by students. Framing the discussion this way will help you have a productive discussion focused on solutions.

Some campus officials may be reluctant to get actively involved with community prevention efforts for fear of diminishing the school's reputation. This argument has two common but opposing variations. Some presidents fear that speaking out and taking decisive action make it appear that their school's problems are worse than those found elsewhere. Other presidents fear that such steps would discourage applications from prospective students who look forward to having a "good time" in college.

What's the answer? As a group, college and university presidents must accept that alcohol and other drug problems are faced by virtually all institutions of higher education. Clearly, these problems are more prevalent at some schools than at others, but no school is immune. For example, MIT's high-risk drinking rate is well below the national average, yet a first-year student died there in 1997 from alcohol poisoning. Most people understand this reality, which can make the failure to speak out seem irresponsible.

At the same time, college and university presidents must learn more about the positive experiences of institutions that have implemented and enforced tougher policies. For example, some administrators at the University of Rhode Island were afraid that the institution's new policies would discourage applications, yet just the opposite happened. Applications for admission to the university were up, not only in number, but also very significantly in the quality of student. Since 1994, SAT scores have increased 140 points on average. Other institutions have reported similar outcomes.

Another potential barrier to participation may be the president's fear of political opposition, which may interfere with the school's ability to achieve other goals. Some alumni have fond but distorted memories of their own college days awash in alcohol, and they resist change. Some liquor store, bar and restaurant owners worry about the impact of tighter restrictions on their profits. Some students think that how much alcohol they consume is none of the school's business. Faculty may argue that the school's proper focus is what happens in the classroom. Usually, however, a president's leadership in a community-based prevention coalition is widely applauded by most college and university trustees and administrators, plus the majority of students, their parents, faculty and alumni.

College presidents will be less comfortable signing on to a community-based prevention coalition that has a reputation for confrontational tactics with local politicians or business owners. The culture on most campuses supports consensus building. Moreover, colleges and universities rely on public goodwill and support to achieve a broad range of objectives related to their educational mission. From the president's standpoint, risking key relationships over a single issue is seldom in their institution's best interests. This does not mean that a community-based coalition should hesitate to push its agenda, only that it do so in a professional manner that is consistent with the school's public image.

Working in Partnership with Local Colleges and Universities

Do Campus and Community Coalitions Work?

Emerging research evidence shows that campus and community coalitions can have a significant impact on their community. For example, in Albany, NY, the Committee on University and Community Relations was formed in 1990 in response to increasing community complaints and news publicity about problems resulting from off-campus student drinking, including noise, litter, vandalism and other public safety problems. Members include Albany's colleges and universities, neighborhood associations, local business owners, the police and fire departments and community-based organizations.

The committee's "Cooperating Tavern" program, launched in 1995, features a Tavern Owner Advertisement Agreement developed with a representative of the Empire State Restaurant and Tavern Association and the owners of 14 local bars and restaurants located in traditional off-campus student neighborhoods. Tavern owners who sign the voluntary agreement agree to meet the following guidelines in designing their advertising:

(1) To include a statement asking patrons to be respectful of neighborhood residents and to behave responsibly and in a civil manner when leaving the establishment;

(2) To emphasize the legal necessity of being 21 years of age or older, with a valid form of identification, to obtain alcohol;

(3) To avoid language or illustrations that promote irresponsible alcohol consumption (e.g., "Toxic Thursdays," "Sponsored by Drinkers Unlimited"); and

(4) To promote nonalcoholic beverages and food specials at the same level as alcoholic beverage specials.

A copy of a "Cooperating Tavern" sign is provided for display to the participating taverns, and logos are provided to include on tavern advertisements (see above).

In addition, tavern owners agree to comply with both community and campus policies concerning the posting and distribution of advertisements. Committee members monitor on-campus publications and bulletin boards, identify advertisements that violate the agreement, and then work with the tavern owners to revise the ads.

The committee, working with the Albany police and fire departments and the state liquor licensing authority, also meets regularly with tavern and restaurant owners and with off-premise beverage distributors to discuss responsible beverage service. These meetings provide instruction on current alcohol service laws and discuss strategies for minimizing underage drinking.

Stricter law enforcement is another focus of the committee's alcohol prevention efforts. Committee members have encouraged the Albany police to arrest students using false identification (ID). The committee purchased special lights to assist tavern owners in detecting altered IDs and provides updated information on the latest technology for detecting false IDs.

These initiatives were associated with a decline in the number of alcohol-related problems in the community, as indicated by sizeable decreases in the number of off-campus noise ordinance reports filed by police (an 82 percent drop in seven years) and the number of calls to a university-maintained hotline for reporting off-campus problems (an 84 percent drop in eight years).

Committee members attribute their success to a number of factors, including the following:

(1) Active support of the city's political leadership and the University at Albany's president;

(2) An open membership policy, leading to the involvement of several key stakeholders;

(3) Media publicity to increase the visibility of the committee's work and build community support;

(4) Ongoing dialogue and communication;

(5) A spirit of cooperation;

(6) Flexibility and a willingness to compromise; and

(7) A long-term commitment to the program.

Other communities reporting similar success include Tucson, AZ; San Diego, CA; Lincoln, NE, and Bloomsburg, PA. The Higher Education Center can furnish additional information about these and other coalition success stories.

SUMMARY:

College and university presidents are under greater public scrutiny to do something about problems related to alcohol and other drug use. Encouraged by the U.S. Department of Education's Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention, many academic leaders are now reaching out to their local communities to forge new prevention partnerships. This creates an opportune time for leaders of existing community-based prevention coalitions to approach the academic community and to benefit from its full and enthusiastic participation. The Higher Education Center can put your coalition in touch with a variety of resources to help you take this step.

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Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America is a membership-driven organization put in place to give anti-drug and drug-related violence coalitions technical assistance and support.

The purpose of the *Strategizer Technical Assistance Manuals* is to provide step-by-step guidance on various topics relevant to the work you do in your community each day. We know you are busy, so *Strategizers* are designed to be easy-to-use guides that help to streamline the planning process.

Strategizers cover such topics as long-range planning, board and staff development, development of media strategies, marketing planning, fundraising for coalition operations and programs, methods for engaging hard-to-reach populations, and more. For a current list of *Strategizer Technical Assistance Manuals* or for additional technical assistance on the topic covered in this *Strategizer*, contact the CADCA staff by writing to:

901 North Pitt Street, Suite 300
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Or call toll-free: 1-800-54-CADCA

Please notify CADCA regarding the technical assistance needs you may have. Your coalition is on the front line against the ravages of drugs, alcohol and violence.

Working in Partnership with Local Colleges and Universities

What Resources Are Available for Help?

Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention

The U.S. Department of Education's Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention is the nation's primary resource for assisting colleges and universities develop, implement and evaluate policies and programs for the prevention of problems related to alcohol and other drug use and violence.

The Higher Education Center has been operated since 1995 by a team of professionals based at Health and Human Development Programs, Education Development Center, Inc., Newton, MA, in partnership with the Harvard School of Public Health, Social & Health Services, Ltd., Rockville, MD, and the University of California at San Diego.

Nationally, the Higher Education Center has been the driving force behind the creation of a new campus and community infrastructure that can implement an environmental management approach to prevention. To this end, the Center seeks to promote strong and visionary leadership from college and university presidents, to catalyze the development of new state and regional prevention initiatives, and to stimulate the formation of campus and community coalitions. The Center has also created a program of training, technical assistance, publications and evaluation services that grounds these prevention initiatives in a system of ongoing assessment, outcomes-based strategic planning and evaluation.

For assistance on how to approach college or university officials in your area, contact the Higher Education Center, (800) 676-1730, or via e-mail at HigherEdCtr@edc.org.

The Center's Web site (www.edc.org/hec/) provides valuable information on college-based prevention experts. These experts include Center Associates, a national network of experienced higher education alcohol, other drug, and violence prevention professionals, who can speak, give workshop presentations at training conferences, or provide other assistance to campus and community coalitions.

Network of Colleges and Universities Committed to the Elimination of Drug and Alcohol Abuse

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, the Network of Colleges and Universities is a voluntary organization of nearly 1,500 institutions of higher education dedicated to the reduction of substance use-related problems on campus. The Network's main objective is to promote collaborative prevention efforts among colleges and universities. Much of this work is organized through a system of regional organizations, each led by a volunteer regional coordinator.

A directory of member institutions can be found at www.edc.org/hec/network/.

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